

Category #23:

OGS guidelines should specify the use of products that are non-toxic or have the lowest level of toxicity.

State Response:

OGS agrees that impacts to human health (e.g. children and other school building occupants) and the environment should be minimized, to the extent possible. To achieve this goal, OGS has adopted environmental and health criteria that reduce the potential for impacts on health and the environment by specifying that cleaning products meet certain toxicological and environmental requirements. With respect to toxicological criteria, the OGS guidelines stipulate that products can not contain carcinogens, teratogens (reproductive toxicants), skin sensitizers, skin and eye irritants, or have ingredients that exceed oral and inhalation toxicity requirements. As a further health and environmental precaution, the OGS guidelines also restrict the level of volatile organic chemicals permitted in cleaning products. These measures will substantially reduce the potential for cleaning products to adversely affect school children and the environment. These Guidelines will be periodically reviewed and revised as the marketplace is able to provide effective cleaning products that further reduce the potential for cleaning products to adversely effect school children and the environment.

Frequently Asked Public Comment:

Lowest Toxicity Possible While Maintaining Highest Level of Efficacy (Choose Products with Least Level of Toxicity or Non-Toxic)

--Achieve the least level of toxicity while maintaining the highest level of efficacy (Apply to all cleaning products).

(Deirdre Imus, Founder and President, The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology, Hackensack University Medical Center, The David Joseph Jurist Research Center For Tomorrows Children, Hackensack, NJ 07601)

--Guidelines must establish the highest standards for health and safety – only choosing products with the least level of toxicity or non toxic.

(Deirdre Imus, Founder and President, The Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology, Hackensack University Medical Center, The David Joseph Jurist Research Center For Tomorrows Children, Hackensack, NJ 07601)

--I believe the response from the Soap and Detergent Association spokesman Brian Sansoni was lacking - he's puzzled that people want potentially harmful chemicals removed from children's classrooms - and even questions "what people are looking for ?" I think people, especially students and staff, are looking for all toxic chemicals to be removed from our schools !

There are many environmentally safe and effective cleaners - that are chem-free and made from all-natural ingredients that would be much more suitable for NY States schools - please consider mandating a list of these acceptable cleaning agents !

(Richard Peters, 7th Grade Teacher, Lynch Middle School, Amsterdam, NY)

--We are concerned parents who feels that chemicals do not belong in our schools. Our son has add-hd and chemical exposure seems to worsen his behavior. Please help to remove these toxic chemicals from our children's schools!

(Christina and Andrew Luebker, Parents of Son with add-hd, Huntington, NY)

--Toxic chemicals don't belong in the same environment as children. Over the years our culture has slowly begun to realize this. While it is not possible to leave anywhere totally free of toxic chemicals, since they

exist in more things than most people would fear to know, we should use safer alternatives whenever possible. One clear example where safe alternatives exist is in cleaning products. Some of the worst chemicals can be found in the products that are currently used in schools around children. The solution is quite simple; just use the safe alternatives that exist. They are out there, and I hope that issues of price would not deter a safe choice for the children/future of New York. Plus, it also looks go to be the one who starts a positive trend!

(Tom Lavin, Mamaroneck, NY)

--I support broader measures to keep toxic cleaning products out of our schools. Asthma and the proper development of our children's physical growth are serious matters and should be taken seriously. Please consider overhauling your rulings on cleaning procedures to include safer products for our children!

(Andrea Pollak, Eastchester School District, The Greenvale School, Scarsdale, NY)

--I am very concerned about the chemicals we use in schools. You can provide a safe clean environment for children without using dangerous chemicals. In my first grade room, I use hydrogen peroxide and white vinegar. When sprayed, one after the other, they provide as much protection as the chemical cleaners, and they do not hurt the children.

(Elissa Kompanek, 1st Grade Teacher)

--Many schools and hospitals are already using "green products." There is a lot of information at dienviro.com about what is in today's cleaning products and why they are dangerous. The site is sponsored by Hackensack Medical University and Medical Center.

Hackensack University has greened its hospital by developing "Greening the Cleaning" products that eliminate toxic ingredients. After reading the information on the website, it certainly seems prudent to eliminate toxic products from all schools. Something is causing an uptick in children's asthma and learning disabilities; hence, non-toxic products could be a step in the right direction.

Deidre Imus works out of Hackensack Medical Center and she offers her expertise in greening other hospitals and schools. (Kim Cagle [penfield716@yahoo.com])

--It has come to my attention that cleaning products in many of our schools need to be improved for a safer environment in the future for our children. I fully support the implementation of green cleaning products due to the fact that many of the cleaning products used contain endocrine disrupting chemicals linked to reproductive disorders and cancer related illnesses. I support the prohibition of chemicals such as diethyl phthalate also the use of volatile organic compounds exceeding 1% for other health related reasons. Why should our children who are in critical stages of development be subject to chemicals linked to these effects when we have access to safer, organic alternatives? I urge you to stand behind the implementation of safer cleaning supplies in our schools, as I plan to use in my home. (Sarah Reding, Auburn, NY)